

Community Interpreting Guidance for Centres



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Guidance for Centres on the Ascentis Suite of Qualifications in Community Interpreting (Levels 1, 2 and 3)



Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for Centres and staff who are intending to offer any of the Ascentis qualifications in Community Interpreting: Level 1 Award in Understanding Community Interpreting, Level 2 Certificate in Preparing for the Community Interpreting Role and Level 3 Certificate in Community Interpreting. The guidance covers selection, delivery and assessment for staff who directly support teaching and learning. There is also advice about appropriate qualification routes. It should be read in conjunction with the Ascentis specifications for the qualifications, which can be found on the Ascentis website.

Why choose an Ascentis Community Interpreting Qualification?

Although there is currently no formal requirement for community interpreters to be qualified, interpreting agencies are advised to require their prospective interpreters / linguists to have achieved a Level 3 qualification as a minimum for paid work in public services. (The public services covered in these qualifications and representing those in which Community Interpreters most frequently work are: Health Education, Housing, Immigration, Mental Health, Social Services and Welfare Benefits).

The Ascentis qualifications are referenced to the National Occupational Standards for Interpreting and are included on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). The RQF is the national framework for creating and accrediting qualifications in England and Northern Ireland. The qualifications have become nationally recognised within the Community Interpreting sector.

A higher level of qualification is required for Police, Court and Legal interpreting work, or for more complex appointments. Higher-level qualifications include the Diploma in Police Interpreting (DPI) and the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI), both of which are offered through the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL).

Ascentis Level 3 Certificate in Community Interpreting

This comprises seven units: six mandatory and seven optional choices from a range of public services.

The aim of the qualification is to develop the skills and knowledge required to work as a Community Interpreter. It covers:

- The Role of the Interpreter in the Community
- Statutory and voluntary public service knowledge and terminology
- Techniques (modes) of interpreting, including sight translation and two-way interpreting
- Professional aspects of working as an interpreter trained to follow codes of practice / ethics
- Personal reflection by the interpreter and a focus on Continued Professional Development.

Ascentis Level 1 Award in Understanding Community Interpreting and Ascentis Level 2 Certificate in Preparing for the Community Interpreting Role

These are lower level, preparatory qualifications and are not intended to be used to gain paid work. They were developed to create a progression route to the Level 3 Community Interpreting certificate and the vocational area of interpreting. Both levels focus on the skills and knowledge which potential learners may lack at an appropriate level and develop these incrementally. The main obstacles in selection for the Level 3 qualification are usually:

- Weak spoken formal and informal English language
- Weak written English Language
- Limited knowledge of the community language (often because of time spent out of the learners' original country)
- Poor academic/study skills (usually due to limited schooling or time having passed since last studying)
- Lack of awareness/knowledge of public services and the current terminology which is used in them (often due to having spent only a short time in the UK)
- Lack of experience of interpreting (either paid or unpaid; ideally some experience should be with community members not closely associated with the learners so they can understand how the role varies when the client is unknown to the interpreter).

It is not necessary for a Centre to offer all levels of the Community Interpreting suite of qualifications, but it would be useful to know of other centres delivering other levels and signpost as appropriate.

Many Centres use the Level 1 and Level 2 as progression routes from ESOL classes.

Both levels cover:

- Public service knowledge and language
- English language skills, especially around appropriate levels of formality and informality of language
- Study and portfolio building skills
- Preparing for and undertaking voluntary work in bilingual communities
- Key aspects of the role of the Community Interpreter

Thinking about Offering the Qualifications

Prior to (and during) the delivery of the Community Interpreting qualifications, there are many factors which will need to be considered. This document will identify some of them and will suggest points that Centres may find useful. These are not provided as prescriptive or unique solutions to the issues a Centre might encounter however, if Centre research identifies that there is a market for a Community Interpreting qualification, then the Centre should consider the necessary resources to deliver a course. These would include:

Appropriate Staff to Deliver and Assess the Qualification

It is essential that the staff delivering courses leading to any of these qualifications have:

- Excellent English with an understanding and appreciation of language issues
- Knowledge of a community language.
- A theoretical knowledge of Community Interpreting and, in the case of Level 3, some recent experience of interpreting between at least one Community Language and English in the public sector (not necessarily paid).

- Knowledge of the UK's public services and how interpreters are used within them.
- A recognised teaching qualification (or be working towards one). Assessors must be able to make appropriate assessment decisions.
- Internal Quality Assurers need to have knowledge and experience of the Internal Quality Assurance processes.

It would be challenging for teaching staff with limited interpreting expertise to develop sufficient knowledge of public service interpreting to be able to offer more than the Level 1 and 2 preparatory qualifications credibly, and to fully support the learners in developing the skills they would require in the workplace.

These staff can extend their Community Interpreting knowledge and understanding by undertaking the Community Interpreting Level 3 prior to delivery, although they would still be required to have had some experience of interpreting. There is no compensating for the value of having a qualification delivered by a specialist, who can offer advice and suggestions drawn from their own experience.

Assessment of Bilingual Assignments

One of the more challenging aspects of the Level 3 qualification is the requirement for some of the work to be produced in the community language. These are:

- Glossaries of public service terms which are rendered from English to the community language in a written form
- Sight translation, where learners demonstrate an ability to orally render a short-written piece from English to the community language
- Role plays that involve two-way interpreting between English and the community language.

Tutors may decide to do activities in both languages on Level 1 and Level 2, but there is no requirement to have this work assessed.

Recruitment and Selection of Candidates

Once a decision has been made to offer any of the qualifications, the Centre should plan its recruitment strategy and have a planned selection procedure.

It would be considered good practice to produce publicity material, which clearly outlines the type of learner suitable for the qualification and the minimum criteria necessary for acceptance onto the course, as reflected in the qualification specifications. There are no prerequisites for any of these qualifications so Centres will need to decide on minimum criteria for acceptance onto the course, in consultation with the qualification specifications.

Factors that need to be considered include:

- **Language levels.** Level 1 learners should be at no less than Level 1 in their English skills. Level 2 and Level 3 should have completed at least Level 2. A Level 3/4 in the spoken aspect of the community language is a good starting point in terms of fluency and competence. The assumption is that learners will develop their skills to a higher level during the Level 3 course. Many learners will have stronger skills in one language than the other, and many will show a difference between speaking and listening, and reading and writing skills. It is essential that Centres develop appropriate tools to assess learners' language skills, to ensure that these are at the required level to enable them to successfully complete the course and to go on to gain employment within the Community Interpreting sector.
- **Relevant interpreting experience** required for the Level 3 qualification could be voluntary but should include some experience with people not personally connected to the interpreter.
- **An awareness of public services** and the specialist terminology used in them
- **Knowledge of the linguistic community** or communities with which they will later be working

- Study skills, including digital
- Interpersonal skills
- Motivation

Centres need to decide how they will test the levels of skill and knowledge required for each of the qualifications. It is helpful to have an application form where candidates are asked to write about their community and/or Community Interpreting etc. This will also start to show the level of English and awareness candidates will need right from Level 1. It can be helpful to select from a group introductory session, where there can be discussion and some reading and writing, as well as a chance to see interpersonal skills in a group setting. It also gives a chance to assess oral skills in English.

Assessment of the target language can be tricky and expensive if some learners are not accepted as a result of the assessment. As a minimum, those who left their country at a young age (e.g., before the end of secondary school) could have their oral language tested over the phone by a language assessor. This is only necessary for the Level 3 qualification, but Centres should be sensitive to how far a lack of the target language, just as lack of English, can make it impossible for learners to progress throughout the suite.

Centres need to develop clear pathways to enable learners to develop the skills they require to be accepted onto the courses. Partnerships could be established between local providers and community organisations that can provide opportunities for the learners to develop the skills required.

Supportive Learning Routes for Learners

Skills Issue	Remedy
Low level of spoken English	Refer to ESOL classes
Low level of written English	Refer to ESOL or literacy classes
Low level of spoken Community Language	Refer to language classes for mother-tongue speakers, sometimes available through embassies, Adult and Community Learning Services or within local Voluntary Organisations.
Low level of written Community Language	Refer to language classes for mother-tongue speakers, sometimes available through embassies, Adult and Community Learning Services or within local Voluntary Organisations.
Lack of interpreting experience	Refer to local Voluntary Organisations where voluntary work that includes some interpreting may be available. Encourage learners to support friends and family who require interpreting support. Encourage participation in Ascentis Levels 1 or 2 Community Interpreting preparation qualifications.
Low level of interpersonal skills	Refer to courses such as Level 1 Employability or Personal Development. These are often available through Adult and Community Learning providers / FE Colleges.
Low level of study skills	Refer to courses such as Level 1 Employability or Personal Development. These are often available through Adult and Community Learning providers/ FE Colleges. Encourage participation in Ascentis Levels 1 or 2 Community Interpreting preparation qualifications.

Lack of Public Service knowledge	Provide learners with relevant Local and National Government websites to enable them to become familiar with Public Services. There are also Adult and Community Learning courses that include a focus on Public Service provision. Also, encourage participation in Ascentis Levels 1 and 2 Community Interpreting preparation qualifications.
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Assessments

Learners' needs should be considered when planning assessments and feedback. Some issues to consider are:

- Do the learners understand what they are being asked to do?
- Would it be useful to provide guidelines for completing assessments outlining learning outcomes and assessment criteria?
- Some exemplar material may aid clarity for learners e.g., completed portfolios from previous learners.
- An assignment plan with submission deadlines can help learners to manage the substantial work required for this qualification and help them avoid letting things get on top of them.

Assessment Opportunities for Interpreting Courses

Levels 1, 2 and 3 require that learners be assessed according to the assessment criteria, which can be found in the qualification specifications. As these qualifications are portfolio-based and continuously assessed, the Centre will need to satisfy the Ascentis External Quality Assurer that all assessment criteria have been met and signed off by the Internal Quality Assurer. These should also be tracked using the tracking sheets that are attached to the specifications. For Levels 1 and 2, the majority of the evidence will probably be paper-based and can take the form of question and answer, true and false questions, short essays, matching exercises, gap-filling exercises etc. However, it is also useful to help learners to develop confidence in their spoken English through short role plays, presentations to the group, group discussions, case studies etc. Evidence of these classroom activities could include: video recording, audio recording, peer and tutor assessment and feedback, and should be made available to the EQA at the final visit.

The Level 3 qualification offers a wide range of assessment opportunities including assessment of the bilingual skills. Some assessments lend themselves to essay form (either written or digital), while the interpret two-way requirement is either through face-to-face delivery and observation or through online delivery and observation.

Recording role plays and sight translations also gives the opportunity to review and give meaningful feedback to learners on their vocational skills. Feedback can be oral/written/digital or a combination and can additionally include some peer feedback, particularly from those who share a language with the learner being assessed.

When setting scenarios, deliverers may wish to consider setting interpreting tasks that can be identified as Level 3 and below that level, only initially. A variety of interpreting scenarios will enable learners to practise the skill of operating efficiently in two languages and develop an awareness of the stages of an interpreting interview. It is important that teaching staff are able to devise scenarios that fulfil the Level 3 assessment criteria as well as to ensure that learners are accredited at the level of their competence.

Some Centres will need to ensure that staff are able to do this and it may involve some staff development. Centres will need to have a bank of appropriate role plays to enable all learners to have the opportunity to practise and to demonstrate competence as an interpreter. *(For further guidance on using role plays for assessment, see [Appendix 3: Role Play Guidelines for Tutors](#))*

Assessment of Other Language Assignments

- Centres should consider how they will recruit language assessors and the range of languages that could be within a delivery group. Language assessors should be fully trained with knowledge of the qualification being offered. They should also understand how to give feedback to the learner and the tutor so they can make a judgement as to whether the assessment criteria have been met. Language assessors need to be familiar with the terminology currently being used in public services and its appropriate translation into the Community Language. Some Centres use working interpreters as assessors and might recruit from interpreting agencies or use previous learners who have achieved the Level 3 or one of the CIOL qualifications. It may also be possible to share language assessors with other Centres as the assessment of the work in the target language can be undertaken remotely.
- The assessments for all qualifications will require Internal Quality Assurance and there should be a robust process in place linked to the Centre's policy. The Internal Quality Assurer should hold a relevant qualification but does not necessarily need subject expertise in interpreting. The role of the Internal Quality Assurer is to ensure that all processes and procedures have been carried out to a suitable and consistent standard.
- Awareness of linguistic minority communities means that a Centre that already has links and a history with its surrounding communities will be able to broaden and expand these to the advantage of learners. This works both ways as the community will be able to support and enrich both the teaching and the learning. Centres will have a pool of local Community Language speakers from whom to recruit their learners. The trainee interpreters will then be able to volunteer within community organisations or, later, to gain work as paid interpreters supporting community members who wish to access public services.
- Centres need to develop clear pathways, both for learners whose skill level is below that required for successful completion of the courses so that learners can develop their skills and access the training in the future, and for those who wish to progress to higher levels in the future. A list of local providers that offer levels of the Ascentis qualifications other than those delivered by the Centre (if applicable) and higher levels of interpreting courses would be useful. Information about agencies that offer support to learners in their English language and literacy skills, community language skills and study skills would also be useful.

Code of Conduct for Interpreters

In the course of their jobs, Community Interpreters are expected to adhere to various professional Codes of Conduct and Practice or Ethics. Much of the work done on the Level 3 qualification directly prepares interpreters for adherence to these codes and reference to them is also likely to be made at the preparatory levels e.g., confidentiality and impartiality.

Codes of Conduct, Practice or Ethics can be found on the websites of the various interpreting agencies. They will vary from agency to agency so it is important that interpreters familiarise themselves with all those related to the agencies that offer them employment as they will be expected to stick closely to the agency's codes.

An example 'Good Practice Guidelines for Interpreters' document can be found at [Appendix 1](#).

Further help can be found at the links below:

<https://www.thebigword.com/moj/useful-info.html>

http://www.bournemouthinterpreters.org.uk/~bournemo/docs/Code_of_Practice.pdf

<http://www.nrpsi.org.uk/for-clients-of-interpreters/code-of-professional-conduct.html>

<https://louisoutertranslations.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ITI-Code-of-Profesional-Conduct.pdf>

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/people-and-communities/translation-and-interpreting>

They may also be asked to sign confidentiality agreements (such as the one at [Appendix 2](#)) as a condition of registering for work.

Attendance on Community Interpreting Courses

In a recent survey of service providers who regularly use interpreters from one of the big agencies in London, it was unanimously agreed that an interpreter who is late or does not turn up at all is the most frustrating and irritating factor in the industry. It is therefore advisable to have clear strategies for dealing with lateness and absence on all the interpreting courses at all the levels. Centres may decide that some sessions should be compulsory due to the subject matter that is covered. An example might be sessions on issues of the professional code such as 'impartiality'. Learners at all levels should also be taught time-management and organisational skills.

Progression

Centres should consider advising learners about potential career paths following a successful outcome at Level 3. There are many routes they could take, including:

- Higher-level qualifications such as the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) and the Diploma in Police Interpreting (DPI) both run by the Institute of Linguists (CIOL). There are also undergraduate qualifications in Interpreting and Translation.
- Employment.

Centres should ideally be building up relationships and consider strategies and opportunities to assist progression. These include:

Opportunity	Value
Relationships with agencies / training providers	To be aware of languages currently in demand. To provide progression opportunities for learners. To ensure that course information regarding local provision of Interpreting Services is correct.
Relevant IAG	To be aware of local quality requirements for interpreters such as minimum levels of qualification. To be aware of progression routes for interpreters and be able to signpost these to local providers offering these opportunities. To be aware of local opportunities for the learners to develop the skills that would enable them to access all levels of Community Interpreting.
Local knowledge	To be aware of local language communities, their level of English competence and their need for interpreting services. To be aware of services offered by local Voluntary Organisations to support the needs of the language communities. To be aware of any specific issues or needs that affect local language communities.
Recruitment events	To be aware of how interpreters can gain work such as attending conferences and events. There is potential for Centres to set up job fairs, inviting Interpreting Services/Agencies and learners who have gained their qualification. This liaison is valuable for learners who wish to progress into employment. Developing close working relationships with the local agencies can enrich all aspects of interpreting work.

Voluntary work opportunities	To be able to signpost learners to potential opportunities enabling them to develop their local knowledge and their interpreting skills
Freelance working awareness	Business Link, local interpreter networks, business start-up courses or Chambers of Commerce may offer courses to assist freelance workers with legal requirements such as tax and with support with marketing and developing business plans.
Networking for interpreters	To enable trainee interpreters to recognise the complexities involved with working as a professional Community Interpreter. To enable interpreters to access further training opportunities.
CPD, short courses, conferences, journals, logs	To enable trainee interpreters to recognise the complexities involved with working as a professional Community Interpreter. To enable interpreters to access further training opportunities.

APPENDIX 1 - Example Good Practice Guidelines for Interpreters

The interpreter must ensure they abide by the Code of Ethics as outlined in this section. The interpreter must:

Be Punctual: You should aim to arrive 10 minutes before the appointment time. If you are delayed or unable to attend, you should inform all parties immediately.

Respect Confidentiality: See the confidentiality agreement. If the customer requests, it should be signed. Whether or not you sign it, as an interpreter it is your moral and professional responsibility to respect this code of confidentiality. The interpreter must observe and maintain the principles of confidentiality at all times.

- Interpreters will not take personal advantage of any information obtained during the course of their work.
- Under normal circumstances, no information will be passed by the interpreter to anyone outside of the interpreting session.
- Forms and other information sheets carried by the interpreter, which contain confidential information, must be kept in a safe place and transported securely. They must not be shown to anyone else except relevant Interpreting Service or Health and Social Services personnel involved in the appointment.

Be Impartial: The interpreter must NOT accept any form of payment or other reward for interpreting work other than the session fee. Declare possible conflicts of interest.

Maintain Professionalism: The interpreter must be attentive and sensitive to the needs, wishes and individual background of the client at all times. The interpreter must be respectful and non-judgmental to the client. The interpreter must NOT discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, national origin, political or religious beliefs, disability, marital status, having dependents or not, or age. The interpreter must NOT delegate work they have accepted without the consent of the responsible officer. Interpreters are expected to present and conduct themselves in a professional manner. They should only undertake work that they are competent to accomplish in a satisfactory way.

Aware of safeguarding principles: Under no circumstances should an interpreter place themselves, or be placed, in a position of risk in the presence of a vulnerable adult or child. When interpreters are working with vulnerable adults or children, a member of staff should always accompany them. Should circumstances arise when there is a possibility an interpreter may be left alone with a vulnerable adult or child, they should report this and seek direction from the officer in charge or withdraw.

Interpreter's Rights

The interpreter may refuse or terminate an assignment when:

- They feel they have been inadequately briefed
- They feel that the subject is beyond their capacity
- They are subject to unacceptable demands or behaviour from clients or customers
- There is a serious incident of racial abuse or other discrimination.

The interpreter should expect to:

- Be treated and respected as a professional
- Be paid
- Ask for the time to carry out their required duties before, during and after the interview (excluding emergency situations)
- Receive aftercare support, particularly when cases are particularly distressing or difficult.

The interpreter should not be expected to:

- Be a doctor, social or community worker, secretary etc.
- Be an 'expert' on medical or cultural issues.

Before Accepting the Assignment

The customer should provide the interpreter with the following information:

Service Provider Details: the name of the contact person setting up the appointment and their contact number. The name and role of the Customer who will be involved in the appointment.

Client Details: The name and gender of the client, their language and dialect, and their contact number (where appropriate).

Appointment Logistics: The date, day, time, estimated duration of appointment and the precise location of appointment.

Appointment Content: The interpreter will be given information on the general nature and context of the appointment.

Pre-Interview: The interpreter will be told if the Customer has requested a pre interview.

Additional Information: The interpreter will also be advised, where known, if:

- A relative, carer, guardian or other person will be present
- The information is likely to be particularly serious or sensitive
- Terminology used is likely to be highly specialised or technical
- The appointment is to take place in a specialised environment

Considerations before accepting the Assignment: Before accepting offer of work, the interpreter must consider the following:

- Availability: date, time, place and travel arrangements
- Correct match: Is there a suitable match in terms of language, dialect, gender or other factors?
- Conflict of interest: is the client a close relative or friend?
- Professional limitation: Is the subject matter of a complicated or specialised nature that goes beyond training or experience?

Preparation for the Session

In preparation for the session, the interpreter should:

- **Contact the client (or check the website):** If requested, the interpreter should contact the client by telephone to make sure they are aware of the appointment date, time and location. The interpreter will be told if it is inappropriate to do so. In addition, the interpreter will be told if it is inappropriate to leave a message rather than speaking to them directly.
- **Research:** Undertake research needed to familiarise yourself with the specific subject matter, including relevant vocabulary.
- **Locate venue:** The interpreter should be familiar with the venue and how to get there. If the venue is the client's home, health and safety issues need to be taken into account and the interpreter may wish to arrange to meet the customer outside or nearby.
- **Paperwork:** The appointment details should be filled in on an Interpreter Invoice and the timesheet.

The Pre-Interview: A Pre-Interview is more likely in relation to a specialist appointment. For example, cases around: Child Protection, Domestic Violence, Terminal Illness and Mental Health Assessment.

The Pre-Interview should be used to:

- Clarify terminology and procedures
- Discuss contextual factual information about the case
- Set the aim of the present consultation
- Discuss interpreting methods required
- Discuss any previous incidents when the Customer has not understood cultural implications
- Discuss any challenging behaviour that may occur and how the interpreter might respond.

The Beginning of an In-person Session

Report: On arrival, the interpreter should inform the relevant reception staff of their arrival and of the client's arrival if they are aware of this.

Health and Safety: Health and safety need to be taken into account for all appointments but particularly if they are in a client's home.

Introduction: Interpreters should formally introduce themselves to the client and include the following:

- Name and role: explain the role of the interpreter if needed.
- State the service is confidential and explain if needed.
- Explain that 'everything you say will be interpreted. If there is anything you do not want to tell the Customer/ Service provider, please do not tell me either, because I will have to interpret exactly what you say'.

Managing the Interpreting In-person Interview

Seating: The usual arrangement is a triangular formation i.e.; the interpreter should be in between the Client and Customer without obscuring anyone. This allows the interpreter to communicate clearly with the Customer and client, and increases the client's confidence.

Style of Speech:

- **Direct Speech:** The First Person. In most circumstances, the interpreter should use the first person (direct speech). (That is "I have a pain in my stomach" not "He says he has a pain in his stomach.")
- **Indirect Speech:** the third person. In circumstances when speech is particularly emotional or if otherwise directed by the customer, the interpreter may need to use the third person.

Intervention during the Interpreting Situation: Interpreters can intervene during the interpreting session for several reasons including the following:

- **Clarification:** To ask for clarification if they has not fully understood the concept they is being asked to interpret
- **Misunderstanding:** To point out that the client or service provider has not understood the message although the interpreter was correct
- To ensure adequate time (sentence length, speed of speech) is left for the interpreting process
- **At end of session:** To ensure that at the conclusion of the session the client has fully understood all the information provided and has no further questions.

You must always inform both parties of the reason for the intervention.

After the Session

Repeat Back: Ask the client to check back to assure they have understood and check the Client has no further questions

Invoicing: You should fill in the details of the session on the invoice template (this is best done before the session)

Time Sheet: Ask the customer to sign an interpreter time sheet. If the authorised signatory is unavailable, then you should make a copy of the invoice. If a photocopier is not available, use a new template and copy the details. The Customer should then take the original invoice and process it by passing it to the authorised signatory to sign and then send it on to the relevant finance department. You should keep the copy of the invoice for your reference.

Booking for future appointments: Customer may want to book you for a follow up session for the same or another client. Check your availability before making the appointment.

Good Practice Guidelines: Further Guidance

Introduction: These guidelines on sensitivity, impartiality and advocacy, and special situations are, as the name suggests, only guidelines. Therefore, you will find that during the interpreting session there will be circumstances when the best course of action is not obvious. In these situations, you are encouraged to inform the customer and seek advice.

Sensitivity: The interpreter should be aware of, and be sensitive to, the factors that vary among individuals and groups, and therefore are relevant to the delivery of and use of Health and Social Services. This is practically important, as a substantial proportion of the client group encountered by the interpreter is likely to be isolated and socially disadvantaged. These include:

- Experiences of racism and/or other forms of discrimination
- Previous negative experiences of the Health and Social Services
- Beliefs about the causes of, and treatments for illness
- Attitudes to illness in general, and in particular disorders
- Problems encountered by refugees and recent migrants
- Negative attitudes (stigma) to particular conditions e.g., mental health issues, or procedures e.g., compulsory admission to hospitals under the Mental Health Act.
- Fear of death
- Financial and other social problems
- Fear of attack and victimisation in everyday life
- Other stressful situations.

Impartiality and Advocacy: Some aspects of the Community Interpreter's work may involve elements that are quite close to advocacy. However, sessional interpreters are not employed as advocates and should be careful not to take on the extra responsibilities of such a role. The following is provided as guidance as to the role of the Community Interpreter:

Do not speak for the client: The interpreter should resist any temptation of speaking for the client, or pleading their case. This does not prevent the interpreter reminding clients of their rights or questions they wanted to ask.

Clarify words and terminology: The interpreter must make every attempt to clarify the meanings of words or terminology used by the service provider or the client when these are unfamiliar, or where exact equivalents are not available. (It is always safer to acknowledge ignorance.)

Subconscious messages and unconscious bias: Information may be conveyed to the interpreter by way of indirect, discrete, unconscious or unclear messages and disclosures (either verbally or non-verbally) by the client or service provider. In this case, the interpreter should confirm whether this is to be conveyed. This can be achieved through asking for clarification.

Do not set yourself up as a cultural expert: The interpreter must be sensitive to the possibility of 'setting themselves up' as a cultural expert. When the customer shows curiosity or surprise on a specific matter, the interpreter may inform them of systems within the client's culture that underpin their statements or behaviour. The interpreter's personal view of such systems must not be allowed to intrude on the interpreting session, nor must the interpreter stereotype.

Advice giving: The interpreter's task is not to provide advice or counselling to the client. This is often the task of the service provider. If the client asks the interpreter for advice, they can signpost the client to appropriate support organisations or agencies.

Role Boundaries: The interpreter is not a social worker or a community worker, and should not allow themselves to be used as such.

Consent: The interpreter should be aware that consent is a paramount issue and process in examination, treatment or care, and all areas of medicine. The client has a right to choose after being fully informed.

- The client may choose not to consent to a particular procedure and consent may be withdrawn at any stage thereafter.
- The consent of the client is of particular relevance to those who have been detained under the Mental Health Act.

Medical and Psychiatric Procedures: The interpreter should not allow herself or himself to take sides when it becomes clear that the client is resistant to a medical or psychiatric procedure. However, in these circumstances the interpreter can remind the client of their rights to consent.

Children's Rights: The interpreter should respect the rights of the parents of children who are clients to be involved in care and decisions but, under the Children Act 2004, must understand that the rights of the child are paramount.

Impact of Client Experience: The interpreter should be aware that a non-English speaking person might have been exposed to insult, stereotyping by others, exclusion by discrimination, or to being 'put down' because of 'racial' difference (racism). All these factors may be of significance in the assessment of a medical condition by the customer or to the willingness of the client to be assessed and treated. The interpreter should respect the client's right to raise concerns on these matters.

Challenging Racism: In your special role of interpreting between ethnic groups, you may encounter situations of racism or other forms of discrimination. If you believe this is evident, it might raise important issues concerning the rights of the client, and should be dealt with in the following manner:

Verbal Challenge: Minor incidents of racism or cultural insensitivity can be dealt with by a verbal challenge. You should use your own judgement in each case.

Termination of Interview: You have the right to terminate the interview if there is a serious incident of racial abuse or any other form of discrimination. You should make it clear why you are doing so, but are not obliged to translate abuse unless the client specifically asks what was said. All such incidents must be reported to the relevant person.

Diet, Religious and Cultural Requirements: When relevant you should consult with the client and inform the service provider of relevant matters of dietary restrictions and preferences and any other crucial matters, e.g., essential religious observance or personal care.

Special Situations

Client right to object to an interpreter: You should respect the right of the client to object to you as the interpreter for the session. The client may raise this objection at any time.

When this occurs, you should ask the client to give a reason for the objection and inform the customer of this and seek advice.

Gender Considerations: You may find that a female patient may be reluctant to share information with a male interpreter (or vice versa) but will not say this openly. An awareness of this possibility should prompt you to make enquiries into this matter.

Client Complaints: The interpreter should respect the right of the client to complain about the procedure of the interview, the way the medical system is organised, or other matters.

Confidentiality / conflicts of interest in legal cases: An interpreter who has interpreted for a client in a Health and Social Services appointment and is subsequently asked to interpret in a court or legal scenario should declare this to those requesting the interpreting. In all cases, the interpreter should observe confidentiality to the client.

Client Travel Arrangements: Clients are responsible for their own transportation to and from the place of the appointment. In special circumstances (e.g., if they are elderly or have mobility issues) interpreters can assist with making travel arrangements as part of preparation time. This could involve calling a taxi (for which the client, not the interpreter, will pay). It is recommended that interpreters do not transport the client to and from appointments. If an interpreter chooses to do so, they should ensure they have suitable insurance coverage for this.

Non-Response from Client: The interpreter may have to deal with circumstances when the client is refusing to talk or respond to questions in an interview. In these circumstances, the interpreter should share information with the customer about this and take guidance from them.

Specialist Medical areas:

The interpreter should be aware of the special problems likely to be experienced by a customer in counselling a client on genetic disorders. Examples of these are sickle cell anaemia, thalassaemia and Down's syndrome. When such counselling is to be carried out, the interpreter should clarify whether a spouse, other relative or carer is to be present.

If during a session the subject matter becomes considerably more complex than anticipated, the interpreter should consider their professional limitation and, if necessary, arrange to have the session rescheduled with a more suitable interpreter.

The interpreter may become involved in an interpreting session that arises from the medical psychiatric effects of abuse. This may involve physical, sexual or racist attack. In these instances, the interpreter should make special efforts to remain neutral.

The interpreter may be involved in procedures under the Mental Health Act. In such circumstances, the interpreter should be aware of the issues and procedures in relation to the act.

Special difficulties will be encountered in the task of providing interpreting skills for the patient who is 'confused' because of head injury or for some other reason. In these circumstances, the interpreter should approach the task with particular care and caution.

Please use the links on  page 11 for more information and support.

Acknowledgement: These Good Practice Guidelines were drawn together from a number of sources in literature and Codes of Practice used by other services such as National Register of Public Service Interpreters; Chartered Institute of Linguists; Fife Community Interpreting Service; Glasgow Interpreting Service; Newcastle and North Tyneside Health Authority Interpreter Service; Newham Language Shop, London; Scottish Translation, Interpreting and Communication Forum and Sussex Interpreting Service.

APPENDIX 2 - Confidentiality Agreement (Confidentiality undertaking by the Interpreters)

Name (Interpreter)

There may be a need to supply documentation and information to the Interpreter for the purpose of carrying out the completion of multi-lingual projects. All documents and other information disclosed to the Interpreter shall be treated in the strictest confidence.

The use of this documentation and information by the Interpreter is restricted to those activities required to successfully execute his/her obligations as an Interpreter for the particular project. The Interpreter will take all reasonable steps to avoid the disclosure, dissemination or unauthorized use of the documents and other information.

1. In particular, the Interpreter is expressly forbidden to:
 - a. discuss or communicate in any way with the written, verbal or visual media or any other third party, any information within any project undertaken;
 - b. copy or show any document or any part of it, or divulge the contents of it or any part of it to anyone except the officer responsible for the assignment;
 - c. publish or use for any purpose, any information shared in the assignment or contained in any document.
2. The Interpreter shall:
 - a. ensure that any notes used are destroyed on completion of the project;
 - b. ensure that working papers and other materials linked to the project are kept secure for the duration of the project.
3. The Interpreter shall not sub-contract any part of any project.
4. The Interpreter must be aware that non-compliance with any of the above where the project is undertaken for HM Government may be punishable under law.
5. I agree to be bound by the terms of this undertaking.

Signed (The Interpreter):

Date:

Please print name:

Address:

Signed (The responsible officer):

Date:

Designation:

APPENDIX 3 - Role Play Guidelines for Tutors

Role plays are the chief method we have in the training of interpreters to give them a feel of what may happen in the workplace and to prepare them for future interpreting assignments. Therefore, we use them both as an important training method as well as the main way of assessing the trainees' skills and providing a video recording of evidence for External Quality Assurance.

When using role plays as a training and assessment tool, preparation is important. You need to think the process through carefully. Here are some guidelines:

1. When selecting or devising a role-play scenario, keep in mind the training point you want to use it for. A role play to illustrate the need for intervention skills may be quite different from one for practising interpreting techniques.
2. When writing role-play briefs, make sure that the wording is clear and unambiguous and that you have included all the necessary information. You may want to suggest exact words the role player should use but this may not necessarily be a full script. Ask someone to read it, to check that it will be understood the way you intended before using it in a training session. If a script is used the people using it should be familiar with the script before the role play and be prepared to ad lib depending on how the session is progressing.
3. When choosing the participants, the role of service provider should be played by someone who knows the service well enough to play the role realistically and to challenge the trainee appropriately. It is likely that the tutor/assessor will play this role but if played by someone else (e.g., another colleague or a visiting speaker) the tutor/assessor will need to give them clear guidance. Give the participants a brief of their role only and allow them time to read it. Talk to them individually to make sure they have understood. For a final assessed role play, the brief may be given well in advance, or at least an indication of the scenario in which it will be set, so that the trainee can do the appropriate research in advance of the performance.
4. The role of client could be played by the language assessor or by another colleague who shares a language within the group (or by another learner within the group, if the role play is part of training). Either way, the tutor/assessor needs to brief the role player carefully to ensure the planned outcome is achieved. This may involve giving specific instructions on how the role is to be played, again to ensure a suitable challenge to the trainee.
5. Those playing the client and the service provider should choose names other than their own to encourage them to feel freer in playing the role allotted to them.
6. Because it is acknowledged that codes of conduct for particular agencies may preclude a meeting between the interpreter and the client before the interview, it is very important to practise introductions to all parties and explanation of roles at the beginning of the session.
7. A briefing between the interpreter and the service provider may happen in certain circumstances, in which case it is important that the interpreter understands that what is said remains confidential and should not be passed on to the client unless specifically repeated during the interview.
8. If completing the role play in class, you may decide to give the entire group copies of the full role-play brief so that they are in a better position to evaluate the interpreter's performance. Alternatively, you might decide to let the observers judge the effectiveness of the role play without being briefed.
9. When giving feedback, whether in class or not, it is good practice to ask the interpreter trainee for their self-evaluation first, including anything which they might have improved upon. Others can then give their feedback addressing their comments directly to the interpreter trainee. The tutor/assessor should encourage the interpreter trainee to reflect on points that could be improved in future performance.
10. When assessed or practice role plays are carried out, whether in class or with only the participants and tutor present, those playing the other (non-interpreter) roles must be allowed to step out of character. All participants can be asked how they felt in the roles. They should then return to their normal places before

the role play is discussed by the observers. Sometimes role plays can become very real, which is what we're aiming for. Therefore, participants may become upset and need to be reminded they are playing roles.

11. Once completed, the assessed role plays need to be marked against the assessment criteria for the qualification by the tutor/assessor and the language assessor. If the language assessor is not present at the role play, a video recording of the role play should be sent to them on a CD or memory stick, on a file sharing site such as Dropbox or uploaded to YouTube or a VLE. All participants should be filmed so that the interaction between them, the non-verbal communication and the pacing and management of the interview can be fully assessed. This evidence will also be required by the External Quality Assurer when they visit.
12. Feedback from the observers can be taken point by point following the evaluation sheet. General comments can be taken at the beginning or at the end. Make sure that any criticism is constructive and directed at the interpreter, telling her/him how to improve her/his work.
13. Do not allow students to make negative criticisms or comment on the way the service provider or client roles were played. It is also possible for observers to get into groups to discuss the role play. Each group fills in one evaluation sheet representing the group consensus. These can then be given to the interpreter as written feedback.
14. After feedback to the interpreter, discuss the role play in terms of the intended training point. For example, if the role play was selected to examine how to give cultural information, draw out how this particular aspect was dealt within the role play and how this experience is relevant to other situations.
15. Conclude the discussion by reinforcing the most valid points made, exploring other possible ways of dealing with that situation.
16. The observers should then give completed role play evaluation sheets to the interpreter and the tutor should keep her/his copy as a record. The learner then completes their own self-evaluation, reflecting on how they managed in the situation. Learners may need some guidance on how to self-evaluate and how to evaluate others so that their comments are useful for further development.

APPENDIX 3A - The Interpret Two-Way Online Assessment of the Role Play Guidance

The Community Interpreting course was designed to give the interpreter the skills and competencies to act as a bridge between communities and to enable people to access services and situations which would otherwise not be possible. The appropriate social and interpersonal skills are formed mainly through mini communities of learning in classrooms with face-to-face interactions and they are to be evaluated throughout all stages of the interpreting assignment.

There are circumstances when a centre may decide to opt for conducting the assessment online. In these cases, it is the centre's responsibility to consider the following

- The Role Play should be as realistic as in the face-to-face scenario; learners should not read pre-scripted scenarios, and the participants should not pretend to be in a certain venue but acknowledge the online setting
- The participants in the Role Play can be in separate places – depending on the configuration and context most appropriate for the circumstance (interpreter and client in the same place; interpreter, client, service provider in one place and the assessor in a different place, etc.)
- The internet platform should be tested beforehand, and every participant should be confident in using it
- The cameras should be focused appropriately to capture facial expressions and some of hand gestures
- The Role Play recording should begin with the formal introduction by the Tutor Assessor:
“This is Ascentis Interpret Two Way Role Play. The setting is I am the Assessor and my name is the candidate interpreter's name is the service provider is Let us begin...”
- After the introduction the Tutor Assessor should hide/block their camera and allow the space on the screen to the main protagonists in the role play
- It is advisable but not compulsory that the sight translation be used in the context of the Role Play. In this case the sight translation document should only be made available for the candidate shortly before the online Role Play assessment – it could be shared online and preparation time to make notes should be allowed.